

Issue Paper
Project Inspector Eligibility: Qualifications for Certification

ISSUE:

The DSA is seeking changes to the project inspector eligibility criteria to strengthen construction oversight of public school projects and improve project certification.

Existing eligibility requirements are less stringent than those in similar programs such as that of the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD). Current qualification parameters emphasize construction trades experience while there are documentation and administrative duties of DSA-certified project inspectors that may not be related to such experience. Furthermore, the regulations lack definition of inspector qualifications creating uncertainties with DSA process for admittance of inspectors for certification exams.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED REGULATION CHANGES:

The following proposals were presented at the February 9, 2012 meeting of the Committee:

1. DSA proposes to outline minimum requirements for admittance to inspector exam by exam class (Project Class 1 through 4). This would provide clarity to the examination requirements and facilitate progressive certification process, i.e. junior level inspectors qualifying for Class 3 and 4 certifications prior to qualifying for Class 1 and 2 certifications.
2. DSA proposes to utilize experience in lower certification class as one of the qualifying criteria for admittance to the exam in a greater class. This process would encourage certification as Class 3/4 inspector as an entry level certification for school inspectors.
3. DSA proposal emphasizes experience in code-enforcement inspection and school construction for Class 1 and 2 certifications. Experience in trades and general construction is outlined for admittance to Class 3 and 4 exams.
4. DSA is proposing qualification requirements that would include other state or nationally-recognized inspection certifications without providing specific references, as various certification programs may change over time.

Based on the input received, the DSA amended the proposal with the following provisions:

- The qualifications include registration as civil engineer as a valid criteria.
- The proposal considers experience as a lead project superintendent on school projects.
- The number of years of qualifying DSA inspection experience is reduced and enhanced with education requirements.

In addition, DSA offers the following clarifications pertinent to this proposal:

- The proposed revisions to inspector qualifications would apply, after the effective date of these regulations, to new applicants to the Project Inspector Certification Exam and existing inspectors who wish to take the exam for a higher classification.
- Regarding DSA acceptance of other certifications, the recognized organizations would include, at a minimum, the International Code Council and the American Construction Inspectors Association. The DSA will review any additional stakeholder input and incorporate it into its acceptance policy, to be presented to the Committee for vetting at a future meeting.

PROPOSED REGULATION CHANGES**(all new text, code section numbering to be determined):****Minimum qualifications for examination.**

An applicant shall not be less than 25 years of age, possess a high school diploma or equivalent, and shall meet the following minimum qualifications:

(a) For Class 1 inspector exam, one of the following:

1. Six years of experience as an architect's, engineer's, owner's, or local building official's representative in code-enforcement inspection with a valid certification as a building inspector by a state- or nationally-recognized organization, as accepted by the DSA. [Note: Possession of a valid California registration as a structural engineer, civil engineer, or a valid California license as an architect may be substituted for four years of required experience.]; or,
2. Certification by OSHPD as a Class A Hospital Inspector; or,
3. Six years of qualifying experience as the lead project construction superintendent on new building public school construction projects subject to the requirements of Education Code sections 17280 or 81130, and these regulations; or,
4. Four years of qualifying experience as a DSA certified Class 2 project inspector and valid certification as a special inspector for steel, or concrete, or masonry construction by a state- or nationally-recognized organization, as accepted by the DSA.

(b) For Class 2 inspector exam, one of the following:

1. Four years of experience as an architect's, engineer's, owner's, or local building official's representative in code-enforcement inspection with a valid certification as a building inspector by a state- or nationally-recognized organization, as accepted by the DSA. [Note: Possession of a valid California registration as a structural engineer, civil engineer, or a valid California license as an architect may be substituted for three years of required experience.]; or,
2. Four years of qualifying experience as the lead project construction superintendent on new building public school construction projects subject to the requirements of Education Code sections 17280 or 81130, and these regulations; or,
3. Two years of qualifying experience as a DSA certified Class 3 project inspector and valid certification as a special inspector for steel, or concrete, or masonry construction by a state- or nationally-recognized organization, as accepted by the DSA.

(c) For Class 3 inspector exam, one of the following:

1. Three years of experience as an architect's, engineer's, owner's, or local building official's representative in code-enforcement inspection with a valid certification as a building inspector by a state- or nationally-recognized organization, as accepted by the DSA; or,
2. Possession of a valid California registration as a structural engineer, civil engineer, or a valid California license as an architect; or,
3. Four years of qualifying experience as the lead project construction superintendent [Note: Experience may be substituted with college education with major work in architecture, engineering, building inspection and/or construction on a year-for-year basis for a maximum of two years]; or,

4. Two years of qualifying experience as a DSA certified Class 4 project inspector and two years of college education with major work in architecture, engineering, building inspection and/or construction.

(d) For Class 4 inspector exam, one of the following:

1. Two years of experience as an architect's, engineer's, owner's, or local building official's representative in code-enforcement inspection with a valid certification as a building inspector by a state- or nationally-recognized organization, as accepted by the DSA; or,
2. Two years of qualifying experience as the lead project construction superintendent [Note: One year of experience may be substituted with one year of college education with major work in architecture, engineering, building inspection and/or construction]; or,
3. Four years of a relevant and varied construction experience at a minimum of journeyman level [Note: Experience may be substituted with college education with major work in architecture, engineering, building inspection and/or construction on a year-for-year basis for a maximum of two years]; or,
4. Valid certification as a code-enforcement inspector by a state- or nationally-recognized organization, as accepted by the DSA, and three years of qualifying inspection experience. Certification and experience may be gained in building inspection, structural special inspection or specialty inspection, such as mechanical or electrical.

Exam Class	Inspection Experience (Code Enforcement)	Education & Licenses	Construction Experience	Experience as DSA certified project inspector	Special Inspection Certification
1	6 yrs. or 2 yrs. experience + engineer/architect license		6 yrs. Lead Project Superintendent: new school building projects	4 yrs. DSA Class 2 + masonry, steel, concrete special inspection certification	
	OSHPD Class A certification				
2	4 yrs. or 1 yr. experience + engineer/architect license		4 yrs. Lead Project Superintendent: new school building projects	2 yrs. DSA Class 3 + masonry, steel, concrete special inspection certification	
3	3 yrs.	Registered Engineer or Licensed Architect	4 yrs. Lead Project Superintendent or 2 yrs. experience + 2 yrs. education	2 yrs. DSA Class 4 + 2 yrs. Education	
4	2 yrs.		2 yrs. Lead Project Superintendent or 1 yr experience + 2 yrs. education		Certification + 3 yrs. Experience
			4 yrs. Journeyman level or 2 yrs experience + 2 yrs education		